

called for stronger national and local efforts to implement proven solutions to reduce and prevent tobacco use among women and girls.

Over the past two years, the CDC has aided State, local and international health authorities over 200 times, to investigate outbreaks of disease, including anthrax, West Nile Virus, Ebola, tuberculosis, sexually transmitted diseases, lead poisoning, birth defect clusters, homicide-suicide clusters, nutritional deficiencies, and flood-related illnesses. The CDC, along with NIH and FDA, initiated a new plan to prevent bovine spongiform encephalopathy, also known as "mad cow" disease, from affecting the U.S. food supply. As a result, the U.S. has one of the safest food supplies in the world.

Last but certainly not least, Dr. Koplan led our nation's public health authorities in becoming better prepared to respond quickly and effectively to a bioterrorist attack on this country. And, indeed, he was our country's public health leader during the first such attack, working around the clock to prevent people exposed to anthrax from developing the disease. Because this was a new reality for our nation, Dr. Koplan placed special emphasis on learning every lesson possible from the experience so that we are now better prepared should we face another attack.

I commend him for all that he has done to protect the health and well-being of the American people. I wish him well.●

HEALTH CARE HEROES

● Mr. SMITH of Oregon. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to some of the health care heroes in my home state of Oregon. This week, I want to recognize the hard working people who staff the Merrill Clinic, in Merrill, Oregon.

The Merrill Clinic was started in October 1996 after its founder, Michael A. Sheets, retired as a commissioned officer in the U.S. Public Health Service. Before coming to Merrill, Mr. Sheets spent a number of years providing health care to underserved people all over the country. He has served on Indian reservations, attended to victims of mine disasters in Kentucky, and aided people involved in car accidents miles away from ambulance service. Upon arriving in Merrill, Mr. Sheets recognized that he was once again in a position to make a difference in the lives of people who lack access to high quality health care, and he started the Merrill Clinic. Prior to the opening of the Merrill Clinic, the people of Merrill had gone without a local clinic for 15 years.

The Merrill Clinic comes from humble beginnings. One early patient at the clinic paid for his services with a 6-pound trout. Now the clinic serves people from as far as 90 miles away—people for whom the Merrill Clinic is their first access to care. Last year alone,

8600 patients came to the clinic and its branch office in Bonanza, Oregon, to receive suturing, casting, biopsies, well child checks, family planning, and mental health services. Such services were previously out of reach for many of those 8600 patients. Even though the clinic serves so many from so far away, the clinic's 7 staff members find time to make house calls.

In recent months, the Merrill Clinic has provided much more than health care. Last year, during the height of the terrible drought and recession in the Klamath Falls area, one patient at the clinic mentioned that she knew of three families that had not eaten in several days. Mr. Sheets immediately enlisted the help of the Klamath and Lake County food banks and local volunteers to set up a makeshift food bank in the back of the clinic. While volunteers like the Lost River High School football team unloaded food from delivery trucks and operated the food bank during the day, the Merrill Clinic staff continued to attend to the health care needs of local patients. The Merrill Clinic food bank, run out of a small kitchen, served as many as 300 people in a single day.

I believe that each and every staff member at the Merrill Clinic is a health care hero. The people at the Merrill Clinic are those rare professionals who expand their duties to meet the many needs of the community they serve. I believe that Mr. Sheets and his staff are to be commended for the pioneering work they do in Merrill and the surrounding area, and salute them as heroes for Oregon.●

RECOGNIZING THE HISTORY OF THE TOWN OF RIDGEFIELD, CONNECTICUT

● Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize the town of Ridgefield, Connecticut, as it celebrates its rich historic and cultural heritage. Located in Southwestern Connecticut, Ridgefield was established by Norwalk settlers in 1708 on twenty-three square miles purchased from the Ramapoo Indian chief Catoohnah. A year later the town was chartered by the Connecticut General Assembly. At its founding, Ridgefield was a small town of farmers organized along a remarkable 8 mile long main street, then called Town Street. Slowly, shops and public buildings began to spring up on Town Street, including the Keeler Tavern, founded in 1772, which served as a meeting-place for the early Colonial settlers, and an inn for tired travelers. Indeed, the Keeler Tavern, which coincidentally still stands today as a museum, was a place for lively debate among Loyalists and Patriots in the nascent days of the Revolution, and became a meeting place for early Revolutionaries.

As Keith Jones, a town historian, has reported, on April 27, 1777, the Revolution arrived at the doorstep of the Keeler Tavern, as the village of

Ridgefield became host to Connecticut's only in-land battle of the war. On that date, a small band of revolutionary colonists led by General Gold Selleck Sillman and General Benedict Arnold, before his traitorous switch to the British, arrived on Town Street shortly before noon with 500 Fairfield County men where they joined forces with Colonel Philip Burr Bradley and other troops from the Ridgefield-based 5th Connecticut line and the recently formed 1st Ridgefield militia. General Arnold quickly took command, and a barricade was formed on the north end of Town Street to await the British troops under General William Tryon who were advancing Southward from Danbury to retreat from the advancing Patriot Major General David Wooster who was closing in from the East.

The three forces engaged in what has now become commonly known as the Battle of Ridgefield. The fighting was fierce, with casualties on both sides, including the mortal wounding of General Wooster. In hours, British reinforcements joined Tryon's beleaguered forces, greatly outnumbering the Patriots while advancing on the barricade. Superior numbers carried the day, and the British stormed down Town Street, seizing the town. With 12 dead, and 24 wounded, General Arnold ordered the Patriots retreat. As he moved his troops back, Arnold's horse was shot out from underneath him, pinning him to the ground. He escaped and made it to rendezvous with supporters the next day.

Despite the valiant efforts of the Patriots, the battle was a clear victory for the British who encamped South of town after burning six homes and the Episcopal church. On the way out of town, the British fired on the Keeler Tavern a few times, after having correctly learned that musket balls were being made in the basement. That day, a small cannonball was fired into the walls of the tavern, and today, the cannonball is still embedded in one of the corner posts of the Keeler Tavern. Word of the battle of Ridgefield spread quickly, and within six hours of the British army's departure, thousands of Patriot soldiers poured into the area to block future British attacks. They were successful in deterring new attacks, and no more inland battles were waged in Connecticut.

Beginning in 1877, Ridgefielders have held some form of ceremony remembering the battle every 25 years. This year, on the 225th anniversary of the battle, the town is planning an ambitious program called "Patriot Weekend." This weekend will include Revolutionary war storytelling for children, historical fact scavenger hunts, special theatrical performances, and a period craft fair. In addition, the Keeler Tavern will host a special exhibit of battle artifacts. Capping off the weekend, a large-scale recreation of the Battle of Ridgefield, complete with black-powder musketry, will be conducted by the Brigade of the American Revolution.